

Notes From The Field *SW*

Opening day Report 9/25/18

UPDATE:

Was this helpful? Let us know by taking this [3 question survey](#).

Jackson

Early seasons in this area showed low pressure for early teal, early Canada goose and youth seasons. We typically see low to moderate pressure in this area for the duck season opener and will expect similar pressure to previous years. Our most abundant ducks in the area are wood ducks, mallards and blue-winged teal. With recent weather there will be high water as we have been experiencing warm rainy weather.

Regarding duck broods, we have observed fewer numbers in previous years for mallards, wood ducks, blue-winged teal and other ducks. Canada goose broods seem similar to a typical year in our area. For total number of birds, we expect slightly fewer numbers compared to previous years in our area. Aquatic food availability is similar to a normal year.

Mississippi River

Early seasons in this area showed low to moderate pressure for early Canada goose and moderate pressure for the early teal season. There are good numbers of waterfowl present for opening day opportunities. Wigeon just arrived in surprising numbers, last week it was gadwalls and northern shovelers. We've had good numbers of mallards, wood ducks and teal. Recent weather in southern Wisconsin has not impacted water levels on the Mississippi river and we are experiencing lower water than on typical years. Most recently we have been experiencing warm and windy weather conditions and expect cooler weather heading into the opener.

Regarding duck broods, we have observed similar numbers in previous years for mallards. Blue-winged teal and wood ducks seemed to have good production this year as we saw more broods this year compared to previous years. Canada goose broods also seem similar to a typical year in our area. For most of the summer, most pools had high water. This impacted vegetation, but not to the point that it negatively impacted structural diversity or available food sources. In the last month, the water levels have come down significantly in some areas which may impact where folks can maneuver to. Overall water levels are lower than in a typical year. Aquatic food availability seems to be lower than normal this year with wild celery, wild rice and arrowhead being our most abundant wetland food on the landscape.

Iowa/ Lower Wisconsin River

Early seasons in this area showed low to moderate pressure for early teal, Canada goose and youth seasons. We typically see moderate pressure in this area for the duck season opener and will expect similar pressure to previous years. Our most abundant ducks in the area are mallard, wood ducks and blue-winged teal. With recent weather there will be some limited access on the lower Wisconsin River way due to high water. Most recently we have been experiencing mild and sunny weather and expect similar weather heading into the opener.

Regarding duck broods, we have observed similar numbers compared to previous years for mallards, wood ducks, blue-winged teal and other ducks. Canada goose broods also seem similar to a typical year in our area. For total number of birds, we expect similar numbers to previous years. Aquatic food availability is normal with smartweed being our top wetland food on the landscape.

Statewide

Wisconsin statewide outlook for this season looks similar to previous years. Brood counts seem average for mallards, blue-winged teal, wood ducks and other ducks. Canada goose numbers however seem to have been affected statewide due to the late snowfall we received in April that may affected our nesting geese. Late snowstorms in April set nesting back and caused a lot of first attempt failures across the state. Water levels across the state are variable with many places being near normal, with exceptions in southern and central Wisconsin. Southern Wisconsin has seen almost daily rainfall starting mid-August making water levels considerably higher than normal. Wetland food across the state seems to be similar to previous years and crop harvest also seems to be similar in most areas with corn being slightly ahead of a normal year.

To be successful we encourage all of you to get out and scout before your hunting trips. Waterfowl hunters in Wisconsin have shown that hunters who scout 3 times before hunting shoot three times as many birds. It will be important also to check your spots out before hunting as some spots may not be huntable due to high water.

Be safe and happy hunting!

5 Important things to know:

1. North duck zone will open one week later than in previous years, resulting in a single statewide opener for the North, South and Mississippi zones on Sept. 29;
2. Elimination of the Horicon Canada goose Management Zone (resulting in a single statewide regular goose zone);
3. Increase in the daily Canada goose bag limit to three birds per day and there is a second split in the Southern Canada goose zone resulting in a goose season that is open during the Christmas and New Year's holidays; and
4. Canada goose hunters, registration of Canada geese and in-field validation of the Canada goose hunting permit is no longer required.
5. Check out [The Basics of Waterfowl Hunting in Wisconsin](#) document on the [Waterfowl Hunting](#) webpage along with other useful tools in our Hunter resources tab for a few tips and tricks!

If you have any questions, please contact Trenton Rohrer WDNR Assistant Migratory Game Bird Ecologist send him an email or call.

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